

Last exit on the left: the radical exile of Peter Watkins

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THE HOME KEY: KEY TO HOME

To celebrate the NYOS Futures “Vanishing Boundaries”, this issue of the Drouth will have a musical aspect. The project is bringing together composers, writers, visual artists and film-makers, in a way which classical music, at least, has tended to avoid.

Musicians think a lot about home, perhaps because they are away from it so often. I don’t need to remind a predominantly Scottish readership of the power of the “leave taking” song. Even when, as in “The Leaving of Liverpool” the original songwriters claims that it’s not the leaving the place which greaves him, we know that for the folk who sing it, it really is the litany of place names and their associations which are at the heart of the song. Emigration songs exist across many cultures, and their function is paradoxical, since they are at their most powerful when sung away from home.

But we think of home in music in a different way, too. For generations of composers, the concept of tonality is bound up with the idea of home in a conceptual sense – that of the “home key”. Classical music might be defined as that music which takes leave of its home key (a process known as “modulation”), only to return to both the “home key” and the original material at the end of the piece. This circularity of musical form only started to break down at the end of the 19th century, as the title of Simon Rattle’s recent TV documentary on 20th century orchestral music, “Leaving Home”, recognised.

So it’s perhaps appropriate that this issue should have as its guest editor a musician, since so many of the contributions focus on ideas of home, place, memory and identity. Perhaps – with the addition of “love” – these are the things art is really about.

Sometimes, as in Chris Leslie’s beautiful but heart-rending photo reportage from Haiti, the idea of home takes a much more concrete form. In one image, a boy stands outside a shack which is clearly serving as some kind of home. In another, a food stall is operating out of a concrete building the front wall of which has simply been sliced off. Chris Leslie reports that an estimated 1.3 million people in Haiti remain homeless a year after the earthquake.

But even when “home” is not a physical problem, the question of identity, of where we belong, remains. In both Simon Kövesi’s “A Hungarian at Home” and Colin Affleck’s article on Robert Kellie Douglas, this question is central. The Hungarian diaspora after the suppression of the 1956 uprising used to be a prominent feature of many countries’ intelligentsia; this generation who were young enough to leave and to sever family ties over the razor wire of the iron curtain are now beginning to pass on: the generation born in the 1930’s are now in their late 70’s and 80’s, but many did not go back to Hungary, once settled into a divided identity.

EDITORIAL

Viewed from afar, the TV imagery of the healing of one of these divided identities – that of East and West Germany – prompts Weissman’s thoughts on the relationship between public service broadcasting and democracy. My own contribution reflects on the failure of the once all-conquering notion of “Britishness”, and perhaps it’s in this context that his article in defence of the BBC should be read. As a gloss on this, one might add that the top-slicing of the BBC’s budget to pay for S4C is resented just as bitterly by Welsh-speaking Wales, who fear they are losing the independence of a cherished and hard-won symbol of nationhood.

Owen Dudley Edwards’ article contrasts two books, whose respective subjects Burns and Alex Salmond – bookend a Tartan-fringed span of Scottish history, as it were. Edwards defines Scottishness as “finding its cultural identity in the cult of a poet”, but along the way manages to skewer the respectable patrician Britishness of the London-based media – a patrician respectability, as Pauline Anne Mackay’s “Bawdy Language” reveals, which was never a part of Burns’ personal or literary identity.

In Colin Affleck’s article, “Windows of Opportunity”, Robert Kellie Douglas revealed a chameleon-like oscillation between an overt Scottishness in his Burns-influenced verse, and a “professional” Englishness, common, says Colin, to many Scots who have made a professional career in England. Similarly to “RKD”, film-maker Peter Watkins found a professional home in exile, but rather than the former’s gravitation towards the centre of power, with the necessary

compromises this entails, Peter Watkins, reveals John R. Cook, refused easy compromises – or perhaps was simply unable to make them – and gravitated towards the margins of cultural power.

Two more articles, by our co-editors touch on the idea of rootlessness in a positive sense. Mitch Miller’s history of the travelling cinema reveals the symbiotic relationship between fixed communities and travelling show people; and Johnny Rodgers’ coining of the idea of “marsupiality” for the cultural itinerant is a positive spin on a state which some have thought more akin to the “bag lady” of recent myth.

Finally, and to end where we started, Steve Davismoon returns us to a classical landscape, an Elysian field for musicians, where place, home and identity are as much aspects of the imagination as they are really existing places. As in the shades of ancestors and heroes of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Steve’s imaginary landscape is populated by the shades of musicians, and we are led gently through a pan-European panorama starting at Stravinsky’s river Bug, ending with the Berio’s Rome.

Enjoy.

AEW



After his court's abolition, and the loss of his lucrative post, RKD returned to his native city, where he lived at Minto Street in fashionable Newington. On 22 January 1855, while visiting Bridge of Allan, than where no more respectable place to die could be found, he died. He was buried in the genteel Southern (now Grange) Cemetery, Edinburgh, where the middle classes could have their own piece of ground in perpetuity. He was joined there by his daughter and son in law James Lindsay WS, and later by their daughter and her husband, William Hole RSA, among others. The wealth of his descendants is suggested by the fact that Mr and Mrs Hole, their children and servants lived at 27 Inverleith Row – a house containing 24 rooms with windows. Mair licht!

Closing the Windows: Conclusion

The trajectory of RKD's career – education, religion, Burnsian poetry, professional status, journalism, Toryism, radical politics and making money – reflects many of the foundations of the Victorian age. At the same time, the tensions of that career – especially the conflict between radicalism and conformism – suggest that those foundations were not as secure as they might have seemed.

There are suggestive parallels with the career of Samuel Smiles (born in 1812), who qualified as a professional (a doctor); left for England in 1839 to editor the *Leeds Times*, which for a time supported the Chartists; entered railway management; and moved away from radicalism as he became wealthy. Smiles would have known about RKD, since he lived in the same street as the latter's wife's relations in Haddington.

Erskine Beveridge, the Fife bibliographer, doubted that the R. K. Douglas who wrote a Biblical commentary and a volume of poems could be the same as the author of a treatise on currency reform, but he underestimated the breadth of a Scottish-English career – from the piety and poetry of Scotland to the political economy of England. The pieces of RKD's life have not been put together before, but he deserves to be remembered. As an anonymous writer wrote in *The Leisure Hour* (1885), "Honour to the once abased Robert Douglas!"

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NY10128 : Katrina Burton

Bog Bodies : Alan E. Williams

Falling Softly, Softly Falling : Ken Dempster

Grace Under Pressure : Joe Duddell

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BOG BODIES: AN EXTENDED PROGRAMME NOTE

At the beginning of the year just ended I was asked by my friend Brazilian composer Marcos Vieira Lucas for a piece for his contemporary music ensemble, GNU (Gruppo Novo da UNIRIO), a chamber group based in the State University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

This piece, Bog Bodies, for flute, clarinet and piano, is to be performed as part of the NYOS Futures Vanishing Boundaries project. What follows is an attempt to give an intellectual account of a process which is fundamentally non-intellectual – the poetic interpretation of real-world ideas in the form of music.

I had written pieces with a Brazilian flavour before: a string quartet featuring a transcription of the song of the Uirapuru bird of the Amazon which I later learned had been the basis for a piece by Villa Lobos. And I had only just finished a flute trio which used a lot of samba. So rather than go over this territory again, Marcos suggested I write a more “British” piece. “Britishness” is a problematic concept, especially since devolution in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. But as a child with grandparents whose identities sounded like a music-hall joke (and Englishwoman, Irishman, Scotswoman and Welshman) “British-ness”, rather than Englishness, seemed a natural home for me. Now, it seems that it’s only outward facing institutions which are “British” – the Foreign Office, the Armed Forces, the BBC World Service, the British Council – and apart from perhaps the latter, none of these are institutions I feel a great sense of sympathy with.

Latterly, I have been learning Welsh, perhaps as a way of compensating for this hollowing out of the myth of national identity – if “Britishness” will no longer do as a concept, perhaps I could borrow another set of myths. But knowing that I will remain irrevocably a Sais (Sassenach to a Scottish readership) I had a gut feeling that dressing my music in the borrowed clothes of another culture, rich and fascinating though it may be, would merely be more myth making. A culture, a country, a nation, all these are necessarily plural concepts, infinitely friable, held together only provisionally by power and economic self-interest. Dig down into the soil and its sedimentary structure is revealed, as one group dominates

another and imposes its own myths on the other groups occupying a territory.

During the 1950’s, Adorno spoke repeatedly of music in terms of a sedimentation of historical process – you can find this concept well explained in Max Paddison’s 1993 *Adorno’s Aesthetics of Music*. At this period, Adorno was trying to extract himself and the music for which he had been such a powerful advocate from an intellectual cul-de-sac, namely the attempt to reduce music to “raw material” devoid of any historical meaning. What Adorno admired now in Mahler was close to the very thing he had deplored in Stravinsky in *The Philosophy of Modern Music*: that is, that music could be the embodiment of cultural memory, in which many ages are present all at once, and previous ages may appear in the form of fragments and scraps of memory, thrown up, as it were, in the furrows of the plough of history.

When I was a boy of 8 or 9, my dearest wish was to be allowed to go on an archaeological dig. I couldn’t imagine anything better than to be up to my oxters¹ in a trench, teasing out fragments and shards of pottery. I know now that I would have lacked the care and thoroughness required by the role, as well as being not by nature a stolid toiler; but as a child, I imagined archaeology to be all inspiring finds and the excitement of breathless brushing off of pottery to reveal the truths of a lost civilisation. This summer my son – who, aged 8, seems to have inherited this hankering after mucky trenches – and I observed a group of students on field work at the sight of a Gallo-Roman Villa at Alise-Sainte-Reine, the ancient site of Vercingetorix’s last stand at Alesia. Their contribution seemed entirely to consist of wheel-barrowing loads of dust from one pile to another, while another group listlessly sifted through it with a large sieve. This was real science – the seemingly endless repetition of small actions in the name of a larger, and ever receding, goal of truth.

Alan E. Williams

Like most creative people, I would be alternatively too lazy and too capricious to be an archaeologist. I know I lack the grim determination of those Italian students under the hot August sun in Burgundy, trudging their way across the field under the watchful eye of a French director of research. It occurred to me that the very foundation for the Roman villa these students were uncovering had perhaps been dug by Gallic slaves under the direction of an Italo-Roman engineer. I never did go on an archaeological dig – as I got older, other things, such as music, had supplanted archaeology in my affections. But I was struck by the finding of the “Body in the Bog” in Lindow Moss, near Wilmslow in Cheshire. My grandparents lived nearby, and the extensive television coverage at the time (the mid 1980’s) reignited my earlier interest. Lindow Moss was an area used for peat extraction, and diggers in 1984 discovered the well-preserved remains of the upper parts of a body. After initiating a murder investigation with Cheshire Police, it emerged that the peat extractors had uncovered a body from the Iron Age, who had been garrotted, struck from behind with an axe and had had his throat cut.

Subsequently I was taken to a lecture given by Richard Neave, a medical artist who was working on the facial reconstruction of the Lindow Moss body. I’d seen images of bodies before, and we had often scared each other as children looking at the Egyptian mummies in the Manchester Museum (“look at the toes!”). But this body was different. Rather than being basically skeletons with a thin layer of translucent skin stretched over them, – the internal framework remaining unchanged, but the eternal layer being eroded, this body was all surface: hair, lips, fingernails, stubble. “Structure” – in the form of the skeleton – had gone. Neave described the way that much of the soft tissue of the Lindow body had been preserved, but the skeletal structure had been eroded over the centuries by the very acidic waters of the bog which had served to preserve the softer outside of the body. A leathery, tanned hide, like a spatchcock chicken, or, with its distorted and distended lower lip and folds of skin above the beard, like the victim of a terrible

stroke. The face and the shape of the head was discernible, but the acidic bog waters seemed to have inflicted their own gradual violence on the body, turning it into a scowling pig’s bladder, an icon made of rugby balls.



Lindow man has none of the strange calmness of Tollund Man, discovered in Denmark a generation earlier; in Seamus Heaney’s famous poem, Tollund man is shown first with “the mild pods of his eyelids”, and then he “now reposes in Aarhus”. The bog water has been kinder to Tollund Man than to Lindow Man, it seems. What gets me each time I look at these images is the hair – Lindow Man’s trimmed beard, Grauballe man’s bog-henna’d thatch, the neat braids of Elling woman. No horror movie director would ever imagine the banality of this preservation.

In Heaney’s poem, the Goddess to whom the bodies are sacrificed is imagined welcoming the victim in an unusually frank (for Heaney) sexual image “she opens her fen to him/ Those dark juices working / Him to a saint’s kept body”. The bog here is both marriage bed and grave, and in this image it’s this imagined repose – earth to earth, perhaps - which is appealing. The peat bogs of Heaney’s poetry, in Denmark and in Ireland, Lindow Moss and Tollund are, of course, accretions of layers of rotted vegetation. Adorno’s insight that culture is also “sedimentary” echoes these preservations of human remains. Even the name of Lindow Moss bars witness to the sedimentary layers of occupying ethnicities in this damp corner of suburban Cheshire. “Moss” is cognate with the Danish *mose* whereas the name Lindow itself reveals an earlier, Brythonic heritage – *Llyn Du*, it would be in Welsh: the *β*. Moss (meaning a bog, not the plant) is a common enough survival in the north of England; but the persistence of Celtic place names where the culture has been effaced for a millennium and a half is a strange echo of the survival of the bog body himself, who has himself had layers of meaning ascribed to him, variously described as Druid, sacrifice, prisoner, prince or queer scapegoat.

Adorno’s use of the metaphor of sedimentation is subtler than it first appears. Of course history would be represented by this geological image. What could be more natural? But remember that Adorno was writing this in the context of an article in which his main purpose was to deny the existence of a fundamental layer, a base layer of material against which other layers of



material could be compared: “the wet centre is bottomless” as Heaney says in his 1969 poem “Boglands”. In musical culture, Adorno was saying, the search for a “natural” layer of material (termed *Rohstoff*, raw material) was illusory. There is no music without historical reference, viewed either negatively (by actively denying tonal procedures, for example), or positively (music in which earlier material is quoted self consciously).

The reasons Lindow man was killed and his body thrown in to the black pool were complex, not primitive. They were the result of a multiplicity of cultural cross-currents, which at the time he was murdered/ritually killed/sacrificed, would have seemed as deep and murky as the waters into which he was thrown. The horror of this killing also serves as a reminder that we should not romanticise the past; Celtic nationalism cannot look to this society of ritual killers for a model either of anti-Imperialistic justice. Anti-Imperialistic they may have been in the sense of being at war with the Roman Empire, but their own society was just as hierarchical as Rome’s.

How far must we go back to reach a truly egalitarian human society, capable of being used as a base layer of historical sedimentation? The Bronze Age? The Neolithic period? According to the archaeologist Brian Hayden,² the first evidence of hierarchy began to appear in human society as far back as the middle paleolithic (from 200,000 years ago). Almost as far back as there were beings who were recognisably human, hierarchy, inequality, and injustice existed. Rousseau, it seems, was right. What is worse for the artist is that the evidence for such inequality is at least partly in the form of “prestige objects” – objects the sole purpose of which is to be exchanged, or to demonstrate cultural status within a society. Art, in other words.

Put simply, much as we would wish it otherwise, there never was a simple society which was not divided against itself, there never was an art which was not bound up with hierarchy and prestige, and there never was a neutral historical standpoint from which we can objectively judge the claims to truth and justice of any particular period or group. What there is instead is mutability and complexity from the beginning.

In my piece, I sought materials which would be capable of similar transformation, which could be mutated into different forms without suggesting that any one of the newer forms is any more “ordinary” than any other. A series of chords suggested themselves to my fingers, chords which seemed to suggest the music of Romanticism as well as the second Viennese school. There was no plan to this discovery; instead I simply followed my ear. It may surprise some that this serendipitous procedure is worthy of remark at all: but the desire for control over musical material has dogged composers of art music since there was such a thing as composed music; pre-composition, a structural blueprint for later forms of material has been the musical analogue for structure. The desire for complete control of material stems from the modernist obsession with originality, and for the possibility of relating all material to a single, authoritative source. Rather than give in to this desire to exclude all potential reference to other works, I allowed any potential historical echoes to flourish. Indeed, I encouraged them, lending my chords a Romantic flavour by ensuring that at least one note should be repeated at the octave.

Once I had that collection of chords, it was a simple matter to turn them into a stream of pitches which I could use as the basis for melody, or new harmony. What follows in the piece is a kind of ‘following-the-nose’ kind of writing, where although all the material is used, the exact order of notes and co-incidences of notes is not controlled. Sometimes, these notes “throw up” some apparently Romantic or Expressionistic sounding gesture. My procedure was to allow this happen, and to try to polish up these fluke moments. The result is a series of sketches where I hope one gets the impression there’s a connection between the ideas, but isn’t sure exactly what. If there are echoes of Schoenberg, Berg or Strauss, this isn’t in the form of quotation, but through an avoidance of the suppression of such echoes that might under other circumstances take place in the name of stylistic unity.

I think the composer’s own account of the “meaning” of her or his own music is probably the most misleading of all possible accounts. Perhaps my piece, in the end, accomplishes the very things I have claimed not to care about – structural unity, variety, individualism. But music doesn’t spring from a structurally coherent argument, instead, it is the rotted- down humus of poetic ideas which gives rise to it. It pops up, like mushrooms, in the dark, out of the detritus of the past.

¹ ‘ARMPIT’, IN CASE YOU DIDN’T KNOW.

² HAYDEN, B. L’HOMME ET L’INÉGALITÉ: L’INVENTION DE LA HIERARCHIE DURANT LA PRÉHISTOIRE (CNRS EDITIONS: PARIS, 2008)

NY10128

Katrina Burton Andrew Stevenson

The visitor to New York City turns a corner and ...wow! ... the Guggenheim Museum. At first delightful and shocking view it may seem that what we have here is something like the first wave of starchitect iconic architecture to break on the shore of public perception back in 1948. Frank Lloyd Wright himself referred to its helical form as a 'quiet unbroken wave'.

But its thus presumed precocity of form is surely only hindsight's fantasy? --rather than looking forward thence to its putative influence, the real significance is to be found in its genesis in the artistic and formalistic obsessions of the architect himself. --Wright's lifelong obsession with crafting a building as a total work of art, with the tension between classical authority and asymmetric vitality, with the exotic histories and styles of the Mesoamericans, the Celts, the Egyptians and so on.

The helix does for sure, speak to our age of biological and genetic issues : what then does FL Wright do for us here with this building, which shuns the mature city form, except smuggle in a bacterium from his beloved big country of the American prairie? 'Is the city a persistent form of social disease?' he once asked, and he saw it as his own personally manifest destiny to ease the Jeffersonian sprawl of citizens over the continent by emptying out the evil metropolis which 'has no higher ideal than its commercial success.'

But his own ideal of an organic mix of home and nature across the prairie should not however, be confused with the Marxist vision of the 'gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country'. For there is no mention of class struggle or capital from F L Wright. We remember this beautifully anti-urban model of solidity and fluidity is the housing for the billionaires' hoard of treasure. It's a very private delight. F L Wright shuffled off his own mortal coil six months before the building was completed.

Katrina Burton's composition NY10128 is a musical meditation on its forms. She writes, 'The impression of openness created in the work is representative of the building's spacious, light interior and also its proximity to Central Park, which was a vital issue in determining the museum's location. By situating the museum next to the open space of the park visitors are offered an opportunity to experience nature and escape the bustle of the city.'

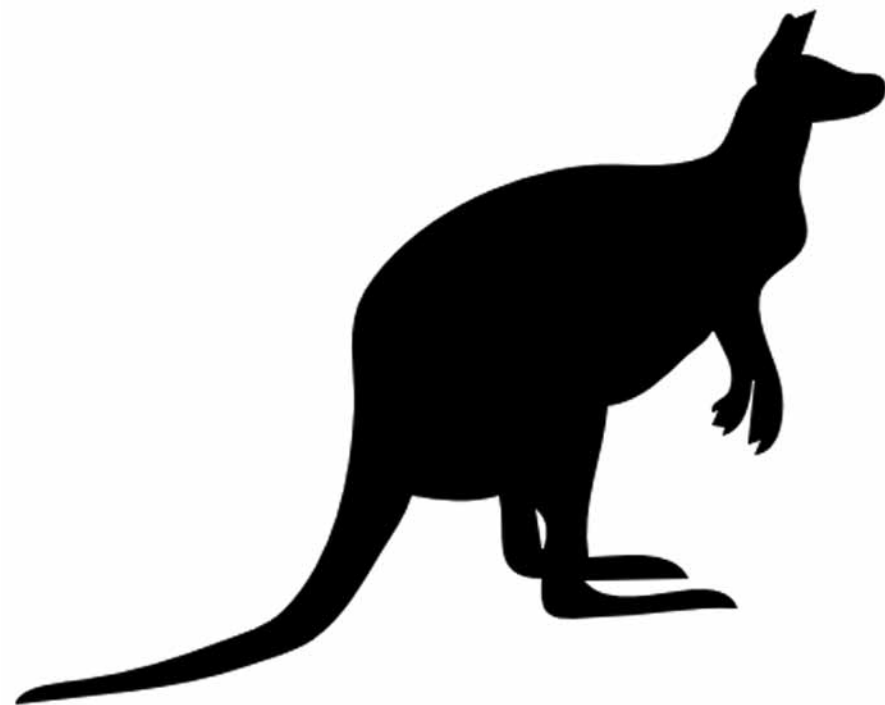
Photographs by Andrew Stevenson.

JR



THE KANGA

THE PLAY LIST : A SLEEVE-NOTE INTRODUCTION TO THE 'BEASTS OF THE FIELD' PROJECT



by Ron Judger DJ

Is there such a word as 'marsupiality'? There is now. Folk asked how we should couch the pouch, as it were. And now that we have this technology—or rather, now that this technology has outpaced previous configurations of the knowledge in nature paradigm—we expect, honestly, that the stoical urge to find nature in ourselves will be gently nudged aside by the much more epicurean delight of seeing creatures further down the pecking order raise their noses for once, sniff in the air, and strain their necks towards the perfumed spoor of human refinement. So when it comes to the wide empty acres of the Australian continent we might see something come bounding towards us, and say, not 'wallaby', but 'wannabe'. And the bonus of having a newly discovered or newly coined term like 'marsupiality' to apply to hitherto unencountered or unexamined leaps and bounds of the natural world is that the tendencies in restless creation are revealed freshly and immediately to us. Where with a more regularised or habitual terminology we are inevitably somewhat deafened to the wondrous aptness of a sound from our own voicebox calling forth discrete phenomena from the indiscriminate mass of the world, with a new word we cannot forget that's what it is --a new word-- we hear it distinctly at work, its lexical apparatus transparently calling nature to us, making it discernible *for us*. Not the other way round.

And that, as they say, is how we put the bounce on it. Of course marsupiality is a human concept – so how did the kangaroo reach for it? There's no progress in saying simply that the kangaroo has legendary status – which animal hasn't? That legend is part of the problem, akin to an old coin with the face worn smooth that you pass quickly across the counter but you can't remember the feel of it in your palm. But with music, there's a chance to let the roo come to us and show itself in ways you couldn't spin to a boomerang. I'm not going to waste space here explaining technicalities and specifications of the process, so suffice it to say that by feeding data from observable and measurable sets of behaviour through a harmonic matrix, patterns can be recognised such that real time desires can be read through moving fields of different sound co-ordinates simultaneously. We quite literally – or rather, musically – build our own kangaroo. Of course it's not a solid, stuffed body or anything so familiarly fake as that, but its analogous to a personality, if you like, an individual kangaroo constructed through many different intersecting dimensions, and that's where the word 'marsupiality' comes in. The reality is here that the music teaches us how not to stop. Or rather, music *is* not-stopping. This is a new encountering with 'kangaroo', but no need to HALT it in its tracks, hold it down and ask what it is. Indeed, the problem with the scalpel approach, eloquent or no, was that the incisive by definition was always cutting through to a place which could no longer be there.

OCTAVES ON MUSIC’S ‘PLACES’¹

...on music's expressive power of location

By Stephen Davismoon

I
Heaven knows how long I’d sat there
gazing across yielding white hills
list’ning to their muted murmurs
...endless strains of distant echoes.
An ageing sun at my shoulder,
whose dying rays slowly met the
purple shadows of the umbra,
...as it emerged and extended...

My beautiful Virtue appeared,
her wings - when extended - aid the
tuning of cosmic strings and flutes –
spinning out glorious order.
She was close ... patient ... beside me.
Turning slowly to her, ... glancing
at her cerulean eyes of
vertiginous beauty I said...

“Tell me again ... place me beyond,
those places music has shown you.”
About my hand I sensed her touch ...
we traversed the blanched slopes ... and on.
In an instant we were stood there
immersed in the songs of warblers
- their ritual sense of rhythm -
on the marshy banks of the Bug.
We could see Igor silently
List’ning to the songs of the trees
and the airs that emanated
from around, ... hauntingly twisting
from passing waters... while he dreamt
of Spring ... verdant... breaking the Steppes...
triumphant over frozen wastes,
so that bread could feed all again.

Then our “princes of song” began
singing with diff’rent voices, strains ...
flying to a far off city
sat low in its perfumed valley, ...
Olivier was sat ... in the
presence of those that sing endless
extemporised variations
full, from the heights of the forest.
Time endlessly passing, ... but my
Silver Angel and I reached him
before its end and were witness
to his thund’rous praise of Mary.
Through the boundless vaults about us
we could sense the resonance of
trinitarian levels of
Musical places: soul to stars.

And on we passed through dark chambers
myriad son’rous reflections
refract upon our journey’s path
My beatific guide wearied? ... no.
All roads sounding us toward Rome
past Cecilia’s final praise,
Augustine’s confession on song
Boethius’ quadrivium scheme.

Still hills echo to timeless calls
of Shepherds, the hard peaks so placed
for perfectly displaced rhythms
resulting in complex delight,
inflections beMusing the ear.
We soared lightly through Umbrian
heights, led by Francis’ canticle
Praising all Creatures, ... elements.

Those self-same beasts attended to –
while we hovered, unseen, hushed - by
Luigi and Roberto, while
contemplating in the dark wood
in preparation for Klarsein.
Those self-same elements exposed
through Maya Quiché ritual
in the Guatemalan highlands.

¹ This is part I of III, the other parts will appear
in forthcoming volumes of The Drouth



ROBERT BURNS:
BAWDY LANGUAGE